

Dr. Mercola's Comments:

How Broccoli Fights Cancer

Just a few additional portions of broccoli each week could protect men from prostate cancer. Researchers believe a substance called isothiocyanate in the broccoli sparks hundreds of genetic changes, activating some genes that fight cancer and switching off others that fuel tumors.

Prostate cancer kills more men than any other kind except for lung cancer. Each year, 680,000 men worldwide are diagnosed with the disease and about 220,000 will die from it.

The benefit derived from broccoli would likely also be available from other cruciferous vegetables that contain isothiocyanate, including Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, cabbage, arugula, watercress and horseradish.

I have long touted the cancer busting power of broccoli and actually posted my first article on it 11 years ago. Back then, animal studies had shown that glucoraphanin -- a precursor to sulforaphane -- boosts cell enzymes that protect against molecular damage from cancer-causing chemicals. Sulforaphane had also been shown to mobilize natural cancer protection resources, reducing the risk of malignancy.

Now, in this current PLoS study, they've been able to validate the actions of sulforaphane in humans as well.

Broccoli (as compared to other cruciferous vegetables) has a particularly powerful type of sulforaphane, which the researchers believe gives broccoli its particular cancer-fighting properties. It appears that broccoli contains the necessary ingredients to switch ON genes that prevent cancer development, and switch OFF other ones that help it spread.

The power of food in normalizing chronic disease and helping you achieve optimal health is quite profound and one of the reasons that I chose a career of natural health.

How Much Broccoli do You Have to Eat to Reap These Benefits?

Previous studies have indicated that people who consume more than one portion of cruciferous vegetables per week are at lower risk of prostate cancer. In the study above, the participants ate four extra servings of broccoli per week for one year.

The researchers collected tissue samples over the course of the study and found that the men who ate broccoli showed hundreds of beneficial changes in genes known to play a role in fighting cancer!

That's pretty impressive. What's even more impressive is the fact that you don't have to make that drastic of a change to reap the benefits. After all, one serving of broccoli equates to about two spears. So we're only talking approximately 10 spears a week, folks. That's it!

Is Broccoli the Right Choice for You?

While I believe foods, especially vegetables, are a far smarter choice to treat serious health challenges like cancer than using most drugs, all foods may still not be the right choice for you. And even though vegetables are one of the healthiest food categories on the planet, not all vegetables are beneficial for everyone.

This is where a deep appreciation of nutritional typing will assist you in selecting the best vegetables for you.

One of the most serious mistakes is for a protein type to consume many dark green vegetables. This tends to over-alkaline your system and worsens rather than improves your health if you're a protein type. This is despite the many beneficial phytonutrients that are present. I am very familiar with this mistake as it's one that I made prior to understanding nutritional typing.

However, other cruciferous vegetables such as cauliflower, which happen to be beneficial for protein types, can also have a similar effect.

I want you to be aware of just how important it is to understand your body at a deeper level, because if you are a protein type and were to eat broccoli, the other effects of broccoli might push your metabolic biochemistry in the wrong direction and thus override its benefits.

The best way to understand specifically what foods are ideal for your body in particular is to learn your nutritional type. When you eat properly for your particular type, you will experience increased daily energy, improved emotional well-being, a feeling of satiety and satisfaction, and, of course, optimized health and weight so you live longer.

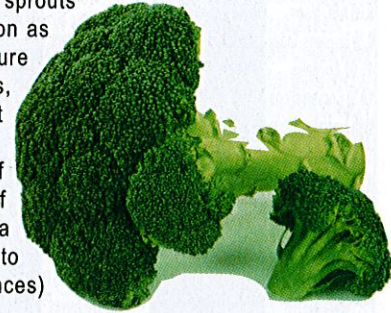
However, even if you were a mixed or vegetarian/carb type and broccoli are good for you, there may be an even better way to get these cancer-fighting benefits than eating whole broccoli!

What Might be Even Better Than Broccoli?

Small quantities of fresh broccoli sprouts contain as much cancer protection as larger amounts of the mature vegetable sold in food markets, according to previous research at Johns Hopkins University.

Just 5 grams (0.17 ounces) of sprouts contain concentrations of the compound glucoraphanin (a precursor to sulforaphane) equal to that found in 150 grams (5.2 ounces) of mature broccoli.

You can grow broccoli sprouts at home quite easily and inexpensively, and as you can see, a small amount of sprouts go a long way. Another major benefit is that the sprouts don't smell since you don't have to cook them. They are eaten raw, usually as an addition to salad.



Guidelines to Help Avoid and Treat Prostate (and Breast) Cancer

The guidelines for preventing and treating breast cancer are almost identical to those for treating prostate cancer.

Below are my recommendations for how to avoid and treat prostate and breast cancer:

1. Optimize your vitamin D levels with appropriate sun exposure. Ideally, it would be best to monitor your vitamin D levels.
2. Control your insulin levels. Make certain that you limit your intake of processed foods.
3. Get appropriate exercise. One of the primary reasons exercise works is that it drives your insulin levels down. Controlling insulin levels is one of the most powerful ways to reduce your cancer risks.
4. Get appropriate amounts of animal-based omega-3 fats such as krill oil or fish oil, and reduce your intake of omega-6 oils.
5. IP6 (phytic acid) is a powerful tool to lower high iron levels (serum ferritin levels). Excess iron can be a major cause of many cancers.
6. Selenium - 400 mcg per day.
7. Consume freshly ground flaxseeds - two ounces every other day.
8. Vitamin E - 400 units per day. (Please note: Only natural vitamin E should be used, not synthetic. Additionally, mixed tocopherol is more preferable than alpha-tocopherol, as the gamma tocopherols are particularly useful antioxidants.)
9. Consume fresh vegetable juice daily - including one small tomato (lycopene).
10. Eliminate sugar as much as possible as it's been shown again and again that sugar feeds cancer.
11. Eat broccoli or cauliflower sprouts, depending on your nutritional type.
12. Have a tool to permanently erase the neurological short-circuiting that can activate cancer genes. Even the CDC states that 85 percent of disease is caused by emotions. It is likely that this factor may be more important than all the other physical ones listed here, so make sure this is addressed. My favorite tool, as you may know, is the Emotional Freedom Technique.
13. Get enough high-quality sleep
14. Reduce your exposure to environmental toxins and sources of heavy metals.
15. Boil, poach or steam your foods, rather than frying or charbroiling them.

Dr Mercola is the founder of the world's most visited natural health web site Mercola.com.

General Advice Disclaimer

This article has been prepared on a general advice basis only. The information may not be appropriate to your individual needs and you should always seek advice from your medical practitioner before making any decisions.